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TCS-6385/73
16 April 1973Copy 50MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Strategic Forces Branch, Asian Communist
Forces DivisionATTENTION :

THROUGH : Chief, Requirements Branch, Reconnaissance Group, IRS

SUBJECT : Completion Dates of China's Deployed Strategic
Missile SitesREFERENCE : CIA Requirement C-SR3-87,770
(NPIC Project 251903)

1. This memorandum is in response to your requirement for a graphic presentation of negation dates, first seen dates, and a chronology of construction for each SSM launch site in China. This report is based on the study of all known photo coverages of each site.

2. A chart, containing the above dates and a chronology of construction for each launch site, accompanies this memorandum.

3. The SSM launch sites are grouped by launch complex and further subdivided by physical characteristics: soft sites and silo sites are grouped separately. Soft site missile complexes which have underground storage areas for propellants and missile ground support equipment are grouped separately.

4. The construction chronology of each site is depicted in as many as four stages. Stage 1 (represented by small dots) consists of initial road construction and construction of workers' housing and support buildings. Most of these buildings were temporary and later torn down. Stage 2 (represented by cross hatching) is characterized by the construction of adits leading to underground storage for propellant and missile ground support equipment. Stage 3 (represented by larger dots) consists of the construction of propellant lines. The construction of a launch pad is accomplished in a short time--from as little as three months to about six months. Pad construction takes place during the period of propellant line construction and is depicted separately with stage 3. At those sites without propellant lines, the launch pad is constructed during stage 2 very near final completion of the site. Stage 4 (represented by diagonal lines) begins at the time when the site is first usable. A conditional completion date of a launch site was based upon completion of the launch pad and unrestricted access to it. A firm date of completion was dependent on observing the completion of the launch pad and apron, road access, and any adits or propellant lines. Camouflage activity, observation of missile GSE, removal of construction support buildings, and completion of underground cable lines to the site were other corroborating factors for completion of a site but were not necessary for the site to be judged complete.

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5. Not all of the launch sites have the four separate stages described above. Not all of the launch sites have propellant lines or adits; however, the symbolism used in the chart is consistent. If, for example, stage 3, consisting of propellant line construction is not shown in the site chronology, no pipelines have ever been observed at that site.

6. Because of the limitations of low-resolution (KH-4) photography and the lack of timely photographic coverage of many sites, launch pad construction and propellant line construction were not always observed in progress but were determined to have taken place between photo coverages. In such cases this construction activity was shown in its most likely time frame or if a large gap in photo coverage existed, is represented by broken lines.

7. Finally, a tapered symbol was used on the bar graphs instead of arbitrarily fixing an exact end point to show the start and completion of a stage of activity. Another alternative was to show what stage was observed at each time of photo coverages which, because of sparse photo coverage in most cases, would be grossly inaccurate in showing true time frames of special activity. The tapering of each segment of the graph represented a best estimate of the start and end of each stage of activity. Such activity was confirmed by the next photographic coverage and represented by "full width" symbols.

8. The first identification of any missile ground support equipment and subsequent observations are represented on the chart by a triangle at the date of photo coverage.

9. This project is considered to be complete. Any questions regarding this project may be discussed by contacting

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Acting Chief, Imagery Exploitation Group
NPIC

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